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The Tosspot

A PUBLICATION OF THE BARONY OF UNSER HAFEN
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Cover art: Photo by Lord Robin of Bristol

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Lord Garin

Equestrian Champion
Ceciela O'Conner

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Lady Rivkah Cantor

Bard
Lady Rivkah Cantor

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The Worshipful Company of Leathercrafters
Reorganizing

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This is the December, 2007, issue of the Tosspot, a publication of the Barony of Unser Hafen of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA, Inc.). It is not a corporate publication of SCA, Inc., and does not delineate SCA, Inc. policies. The Tosspot is available from Mark Breuer, 7133 Brittany Drive, Ft. Collins, CO 80525, TheTosspot@comcast.net.

Submission deadline is the 20th of the month for event announcements, articles, and artwork. Officers reports are due at officer's meeting.

calendar notes

For up to the minute information visit the Baronial web site at www.unserhafen.org and the Kingdom website at www.outlands.org.

bofharrach calendar:

2nd Tuesdays of the month: Officer's meeting at Open Arms, 2114 42nd Ave. Greeley, CO 80634. Public is welcome. Garb is not required. Bring munchies!

fighter practice, baronial gathering, and baron's whim tourney

Join us on the 1st Sunday of every month for heavy and light fighting,, marshall arts class, Baron's whim tourney, announcements and/or brief court, then we all go out to eat! Garb encouraged
Fort Collins Library Park, East Olive, 2-blocks east of College Avenue.
Time 1-5 pm, Sundays.

event dates

December 15-16
Midwinter & War Practice (al-Barran) Solveig 505-830-9388
January 5
12th Night (Caerthe) Jorunn 720-670-0702
January 12
Winter Oasis (Unser Hafen) Zanariah
January 12
12th Night (Citadel) Aine 915-471-2021
January 19-20
12th Night & War Practice (Fontaine dans Sable) Isabella 505-334-2986
January 26
Arts & Sciences (Caer Galen) Merlyn 720-276-3741
February 12-18
Estrella War XXIV (Kingdom of Atenveldt)
March 8
Spring Crown Tournament (Gleann Medonach) Stephana 505-623-3413
March 15
Corn Beef Bash (Dragonsspine) Tiberius 719-232-5565
March 29-30
Baronial Investiture (Citadel) Berold 915-585-3155
March 29
Arts & Sciences (Caerthe) Domin 720-318-8260
April 5
Some-Thing (Windkeep) Catriona 307-433-8241
April 5
A Sworded Affaire (Fontaine dans Sable)
April 19
Danse Mystere - a Masked Ball (Unser Hafen) Helene
May 3
Baroness' Gambit (Caerthe) Forrester 720-560-0627 & MaelMarden 719-385-0812
May 10-11
Outlands Coronation (TBD)

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Equestrian Practice - Lady Nesta verch Gryfryy (970) 587-6427 nesta_verch_gryfryy@msn.com
Archery Practice - Lord Uilliam MacMillan (970) 622-0132 colby0132@comcast.net
Bofharrach - Lord Saito Takauji (720)841-6947 Saitotakauji@yahoo.com or

From the Chronicler

There are not upcoming events for which there are any event announcements available so I have delved into some of the old Tosspots and found two articles by THL Sean Ui Neill and one by THL Nikolaos Demetriou ho Toxotes to fill the pages of this Tosspot.

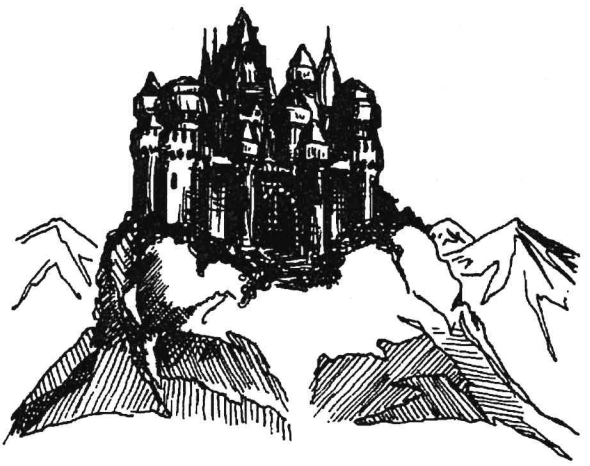
The second article by THL Sean is regarding the Leathercrafters Guild he created. Several gentles have expressed an interest in continuing the Guild so I thought it would be worth reprinting his thoughts.

In other news, I am looking for a replacement. I am not going to jump ship for the first volunteer. I plan on taking several months to train the next Chronicler and not turn the office over until I am satisfied they will do the Barony justice. Being chronicler is not as hard as you might think in some respects, in others it is quite challenging. Assembling the Tosspot is a fairly easy thing to master. Getting content is where the challenge lies. Months like this when the major upcoming events do not have announcements mean you have to find a way of creating your own content.

So if you are interested in being the next Chronicler, please contact me. It doesn't take much computer knowledge, just good spelling.

Also, anyone wishing to see their work in print need only submit it to The Tosspot. The populace has always submitted excellent work and I can' recall rejecting any submissions I have ever received. The Tosspot is for the populace of the Barony. It is your newsletter and is intended to not only print announcements of events and important notices from the officers, but to also feature the creative works of the populace.

In Service,
Lord Robin of Bristol



A Term of Service: What It Means to Be an Officer

By Thl Sean ui Neill the Staffmaker

The current edition of the Known World Handbook defines the term, "officer" as follows: "Someone who is appointed to one of the jobs in the civil service of a Society branch, or to the SCA as a corporation." For those among you who are new to this game that we play, and perhaps as a reminder for some of the more 'seasoned' members reading this, being an officer of a branch of the Society is, first and foremost, all about service. Service to your local group whether it be at the Baronial, Cantonal, or Collegiate level revolves around taking care of all of the major and minor details that need to be addressed in order for all of us to be able to enjoy what we call "the current middle ages."

Their Excellencies, the Baron and Baroness of Unser Hafen, serve at the pleasure of the Crown of the Outlands for a term of around two to three years. They are appointed by the Crown to serve the Barony and Kingdom, as representatives of the Kingdom in Unser Hafen; and, by the same token, their Excellencies represent the populace of Unser Hafen, Bofarrach, and Ram's Keep to the Kingdom of the Outlands. The Baronage, the collective term for the Baron and Baroness, in turn, appoints gentles to take on the various duties and responsibilities inherent with the running of an organization such as ours.

The appointment process in the Barony of Unser Hafen generally works as follows. A gentle who is interested in serving the Barony et al, goes to a serving officer and asks them about the particulars of the office in question. If the gentle decides that the work of the office is to their liking, they may elect to ask the officer to be considered as a deputy. A deputy could either be groomed as an eventual replacement for the currently serving officer or as a temporary aid to the officer while learning the ins and outs of that office. Either way, the help can and will be greatly appreciated by those for whom the help is given. Someone once said that many hands make for light work. This is as true in our game as well as anywhere. As an officer nears the end of their term of service, they will prepare a replacement for the office. The gentle who is to be the prospective replacement will be recommended to the Baronage as a worthy successor to the office. If the Baronage, upon consultation with the Seneschal, agrees with the recommendation and if the likely candidate is still willing to do so, the successor will be appointed to the office as the retiring officer's successor. This is done at a court ceremony at a practice or event held in Unser Hafen.

As mentioned in the second paragraph of this article, to be an officer is to serve. That is: to be ready, willing, and able to perform a job of service to the local group, the Kingdom, and by ultimate extension, the Society as a whole. What any office is not about is self-aggrandizement, attempts at personal prestige, or reflected glory. It is about serving, not about gaining. The rewards come of their own accord depending on the merits of the gentle in question.

The Worshipful Company of Leathercrafters

By THL Sean ui Neill the Staffmaker

Guilds are voluntary organizations, often chartered in on or more Kingdoms; that are established in order to promote one or more of the arts and sciences. Gentles with similar interests gather together so that they may pursue some facet of the arts and sciences as they were done in times gone by. Just about anything that can be imagined can be the subject of a guild, including leathercrafting.

The Worshipful Company of Leathercrafters is an invention of mine. It was established almost two years ago in an effort to: a) promote the art and mystery of leathercrafting, b) create a venue for like-minded gentles to gather together to tach and/or learn from each other, and c) create items of largesse for, and as a service to, the Barony and Kingdom.

At present, there are no established hierarchies or titles and such. I, as founder of the guild, merely style myself as the Guild Head. It is an open forum that invites any and all gentles who either have something to teach or wish to learn.

In time, a schedule of classes will be announced to the populace. These classes will offer any interested gentle the opportunity to learn leathercrafting in a series of steps: these steps will start with the basics and proceed to the more involved aspects of the mystery. The classes will be held at guild gatherings where there should be enough room for learning to take place. As the opportunity arises, there will be "guest teachers" that will teach and/or demonstrate some knowledge or skill for the benefit of the assembled gentles.

The idea behind crafting largesse for the Barony and Kingdom is two fold. One, the making of largesse items will afford the learner valuable practice in leathercrafting. Two, the largesse items will be a gift of service as well as goods to the Barony and Kingdom thus "killing two birds with one stone".

The ultimate goal for the guild will be to create Leathercrafters will skill, knowledge and experience that can take their place in the known world and ply a respected and needful trade.

Recommending someone for an award

By THLord Nikolaos Demetriou ho Toxotes, with many thanks to various sources found on Stefan's Florlegium

Anyone can recommend someone for an award, but relatively few actually do it. Even fewer do it effectively.

It sounds easy at first - just write an award recommendation letter to the Crown (or Coronet if it is a Baronial award) telling them what you think that person should get. Writing recommendations is easy... As long as you keep a few things in mind.

Your letter should be a clear, concise and convincing case on which the Crown or ruling nobles can make a decision; and feel comfortable making this decision about someone they have likely never met. A bit of preparation prior to writing the actual recommendation makes this a nearly effortless task. Some thoughts on this process follow.

I. What makes a candidate deserve an award?
I believe Sir William of Weir (of Ansteorra) put it best when asked the question "How do you become a knight?"

> *First you have to become a knight. Once everybody knows that you are already a knight, they will put a white belt around you. They put white belts around knights.*

This applies to any award. People who get awards do not get them because of what they might do. They have already earned it, and they have earned it consistently for some period of time.

II. Why do you think the candidate deserves an award?
What brought the candidate to your attention? There are three things I look for:

- Actions - What has the candidate done, not only recently, but on an ongoing basis? Are focused solely on their favorite activity to the exclusion of all else, or do they participate more generally.
- Aptitude - Is the candidate good at what they do? Are they a natural, or do they have to work at it? (Having to work at something isn't bad at all! It tells you a lot about the character of the person.)
- Attitude - Does the candidate display their skill with grace and humility? Does the candidate share their knowledge and time in good spirit, or just to be noticed? Does the candidate take charge? If they are leading, do they lead well? Do they keep a good sense of humor?

As I said, these are the things I look for. Opinions vary... As they should.

III. Which award does the candidate deserve?

Before you can answer this question, it is a good idea to know what awards are available in your Kingdom, and what they are given for. You can look at each award's charter online, or ask a local officer for the information. Knowing the award structure of your Barony and Kingdom helps you make the right choice. Do not be surprised if the award that ends up being granted is different than what you recommended.

It is also a good idea to find out what awards, if any, the candidate already has. Your letter will also be more helpful if you include the person's prior relevant awards, and it also help to make sure you are not recommending them for something they already have. This is where the Kingdom Order of Precedence comes in handy. Please remember that the O.P. is usually a few months behind.

You can also, if you choose, submit the award recommendation without a specific award in mind. Less-focused recommendations still do work, but they should be that much more convincing and informative so the Crown can make an informed choice.

You can find the Outlands Order of Precedence and information on awards at http://wimble.outlandsheralds.org/

A final thought: while anyone can recommend someone for most awards, some awards are personal "thankyous" from the Crown/Coronet. It would be presumptuous of someone else to recommend the candidate for such an award. The Queen's Cypher and the Cordon Royale come immediately to mind.

IV. What not to do.

- Don't gripe if the person does not receive the award. If the candidate does not get the award, recommend them again in six months with an updated letter.
- Don't tell the candidate you've recommended them! Don't tell the candidate you think they should have the award, either. Not only is this rude (and potentially embarrassing if the candidate doesn't receive it), but it may cause the candidate to start fixating on the award, and not on having fun.
- Don't use petitions. If others believe as you do about a candidate, they should write their own personalized letters.

V. What to do.

When writing your recommendation:

- Find out how the Crown/Coronet wishes to receive recommendations. Do they accept them via email? Regular mail? Do they have a specific form they wish to be used instead of a letter? We are lucky that in the Outlands there is a form on the web (http://www.outlands.org/awardrec/index.aspx), but only a few Baronies have an award form set up.
- Clearly identify the candidate in the letter by SCA name, mundane name and SCA group. Make sure of the spelling of the candidate's SCA name. If their name has been registered, it is easy to verify online or by asking your local herald.
- If possible, see if the candidate is a member. SCA membership is required to receive most awards in the Outlands.
- Write in clear straightforward sentences. You don't need to write in a courtly manner, just be clear and respectful. Try to keep the letter to one page, and write separate letters for each recommendation.
- Be specific about the candidate's accomplishments. **Remember, you are not making the argument that the candidate deserves the award, their actions are.** Show how the candidate has affected the local group/kingdom/society. Write the letter as if the Crown/Coronet had never heard of the candidate.
- If the candidate has had a real or perceived problem in the past, mention it head-on and state how the candidate has addressed it.
- If possible, mention events that the candidate will attend in the next three to six months. It usually takes that long or longer for the Crown/Coronet to research the recommendation, make a decision and have the award scroll prepared.
- Proofread your letter after a few hours away from it.
- Date and sign the letter. Include your SCA and mundane names, and some contact information. Just like complaints, anonymous recommendations carry little weight.
- Cc their Royal Highnesses if they are known. It is quite possible Their Majesties already have all the award recommendations they can handle, and the upcoming rulers may handle yours.
- Keep a copy, preferably electronic, of your letter. If the original never arrives, or if you need to resubmit the recommendation later, it is much easier to update and send rather than recreate.

Here is an example letter: (found on Stefan's Florlegium; written by Ld. Lancelin, with slight updates)

Unto Their most Royal Majesties Frederick and Wilma, King and Queen of The Outlands, does Lord Gregory Ivanovitch recommend himself and send greetings!

Your Majesties, I write this day to recommend one of your subjects, Bronwyn the Industrious (mundanely known as Betty Boop), for an Award of Arms for service to the Canton of Nowheresville. Her member number is 129543.

Bronwyn has been a member of the SCA for two years and currently lives in the Canton of Nowheresville (Why is this a town, NM) within the Barony of the Rampant Platypus. She has been the Nowhereville Minister of Arts for the past six months and has done an excellent job. In addition, she has participated in almost every demo we have put on, and is constantly helping our members with garb and other projects.

Bronwyn will most likely be at "Push for Estrella" and "Revenge of the Platypus."

Thank You for Your kind attention! On this third day of June, Anno Societatis XXXXI, I remain

In Your Service,

Gregory

Lord Gregory Ivanovitch
Nowheresville Seneschal

cc: TRH Barnard and Betina

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